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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 001276

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TAGS: PREL PGOV EUN GG RU TU VI

SUBJECT: TFGG01: AMBASSADOR MEETS EU ENLARGEMENT  
COMMISSIONER REHN ON EVE OF GAERC ON GEORGIA; RUSSIA,  
SERBIA AND TURKEY DISCUSSED

REF: BRUSSELS 1245

Classified By: USEU/POL M-C Chris Davis for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(C) Summary: In the Ambassador's August 12 meeting with the European Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Rehn said the EU, post-Georgia, needed to re-examine its relations with Russia, including the EU-Russia Partnership Agreement. On Serbia, Rehn thought the French presidency would move toward an Interim Agreement, since relations with the EU were improving after the arrest of Karadzic. He did not answer whether he thought a Serbian referral to the ICJ of the question of Kosovo independence could affect the deployment of EULEX. On Turkey, Rehn thought France might open three accession chapters, rather than the usual two per presidency.

It is important, he said, to reinforce positive trends, especially those leading to entente between the religious and secular in Turkey. End Summary

Georgia

12. (C) The EU's Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn said on August 12 he could not predict what would be decided at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) meeting on the following day regarding Georgia, pending a report from President Sarkozy. He said President Bush's strong statement on August 11 was important. The issues to be discussed in GAERC would likely be: cease-fire, withdrawal of forces to status quo ante positions, respect for international borders, humanitarian assistance, and an eventual international monitoring presence. The setting was more complicated for Europe, he said, given especially Russia's provision of energy resources. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline is vulnerable, and Rehn noted that it had recently been damaged in an apparent terrorist attack in Turkey. (Note: This was a reference to an explosion on August 6, claimed by the PKK, End Note.) Nonetheless, he said, Europe needed to voice its concerns and debate the consequences for Russian/EU relations.

13. (C) The Ambassador said Russia should not be allowed to hold Gori as a negotiating point, and that Russia could not retain a continued role as peacekeepers and mediators, per the 1994 Moscow Agreement. To Rehn's question about the consequences for U.S./Russian relations, the Ambassador noted that the Secretary had convened the G7, signaling less openness toward the G8 format including Russia, and that there was work underway in the USG to identify longer-term consequences. The Ambassador noted that the EU should have on the table a number of options as well including the EU-Russia Partnership Agreement and the treatment of Gazprom.

14. (C) The Ambassador asked about longer-term consequences for EU enlargement. Rehn said Russia was testing EU resolve, and the big issue was Ukraine. He said Putin had been consistent in warning that independence for Kosovo would have consequences for South Ossetia and Abkhazia. "Many Serbians, even pro-European ones," he said, "are saying 'I told you

so.'" The Ambassador maintained that it is important for the U.S. and the EU to signal continued support to Georgia; otherwise, aspiring democrats will conclude there is a hard price to pay for turning to the West. Moreover, she said, the Russian offensive was clearly pre-meditated.

¶5. (C) Rehn agreed that Russia seemed to want to establish a buffer zone in Georgia, and even cut the country in half and weaken it. Noting the striking parallels with the early 1920s - when Moscow used the pretext of threats to local Bolsheviks to take over Georgia - Rehn acknowledged that Putin knew his history. "However, he should have been more creative." Now, Rehn said, it is difficult to imagine what kind of Partnership Agreement the EU could have with Russia, given such behavior. Rehn, who is Finnish, noted there is a reason why his country reportedly has the largest artillery forces in the EU.

Serbia

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¶6. (C) For Serbia itself, however, things were "clearly better," and the French Presidency wanted to move toward an Interim Agreement, which Rehn said counted more than a Stabilization and Association Agreement. An Interim Agreement was immediately implementable since it would be based on EU competencies, not member state competencies. If ICTY prosecutor Brammertz's next report is positive, the Dutch would be more likely to support an Interim Agreement. Rehn thought Brammertz considered the Karadzic arrest to be "a milestone," but that Brammertz had continued concerns about access to archival materials. "This is the first chance

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we've had to make real progress with Serbia," he added.

¶7. (C) As for referring the question of Kosovo independence to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Rehn wanted to avoid Serbia's doing that, but said that if Belgrade can transfer the Kosovo issue elsewhere for a time, it could make negotiating with the EU easier. Rehn did not answer the Ambassador's question about the impact of an ICJ referral on EULEX deployment, which could encourage the UN and some EU members to adopt a "wait and see" approach. The Ambassador also made the point that an ICJ judgment could have unintended consequences for other countries and that we were pointing out to other UNGA members the risks to their interests.

Turkey

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¶8. (C) Commissioner Olli Rehn said he did not have a convincing answer to the Ambassador's question about the impact on accession talks of the Constitutional Court's judgment regarding the Turkish AKP party. Turkish society - Muslim democrats and secularists - still needed to find a modus vivendi, with EU and U.S. encouragement, he said, and this would be "a long and difficult journey." Rehn thought there now needed to be some constitutional amendments, and no provocation from the Turkish military establishment; however, the chief prosecutor did not seem ready to drop his case against the AKP. Rehn thought France might be willing to open three chapters for negotiation with Turkey, rather than the usual two per EU presidency. Rehn and the Ambassador both deemed unfounded the suspicion some harbor that Turkey's EU membership would ultimately weaken the EU.

SILVERBERG

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